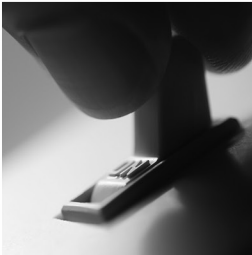




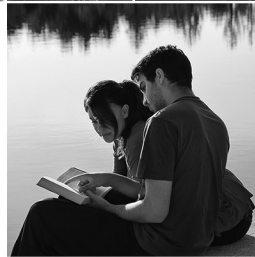
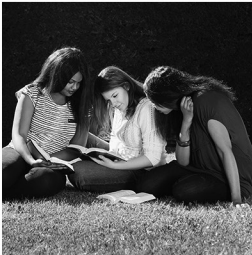
Barry Shafer
with
Lora Barnes
Leneita Fix
Dodger Vaughan



SOME THINGS
YOU'VE GOT
TO KNOW

FAITH BASICS

LEADER PREP





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SOME THINGS
YOU'VE GOT
TO KNOW

FAITH BASICS GETTING STARTED



If you have never fully read a set of instructions before diving in, make this your first time. It won't take long and it will greatly enhance your InWord experience.

WHAT IS INWORD?

InWord is a non-profit ministry dedicated to thoroughly equipping God's people with God's Word. Spiritual formation must include meaningful engagement in God's Word—engagement that leads to regular, consistent Holy Wow. This is what builds a lasting, mature faith—a faith that will survive the tests of life and the assaults of the enemy.



HOLY WOW

It can be elusive and hard to define, but you know it when you see it...or feel it...or touch it. It's those wow moments in Scripture that bring pause, when truth reaches past your protective shell and grabs your heart, leaving you better in any number of ways: more resolute, courageous, awakened, convicted, motivated, inspired. In short, better equipped to live life.

The Holy Wow is not found through a casual or haphazard approach. The words used throughout Scripture to describe how to engage God's Word drip with radical intentionality—earnestly seek, heed, meditate, grasp, understand. And then there are analogies: digging for hidden treasure, searching for silver, building a house on the rock. These descriptions point to the notion that the more we press in, the more we get back. The verses below give insight into Holy Wow Bible engagement.

Psalm 119:15 | Proverbs 2:4-5 | Matthew 7:24 | Matthew 13:23 | John 14:21 | Hebrews 11:6

THE INWORD APPROACH

With InWord materials you will see hints of inductive Bible study, an approach that has proven to be one of the most effective tools available for discovering what the Bible says (observation), what it means (interpretation), and how it can be applied to real-life situations (application). Below is InWord's distilled version as you'll see it in the personal prep (Prep It) and session guides (Lead It).

Digging In (Observation)

Here you will be asked to look for things ("wonderful things" to quote Psalm 119:18) using a variety of tools to increase your level of engagement: marking with symbols, highlighting with colors, underlining, circling, listing. This is the most important, yet most overlooked, step in meaningful Bible engagement. This is when we ask God to show us what He wants us to see, which sets up the next step, interpretation. The acts of observing and digging lay the foundation for the Holy Wow.

Cross-Checking (Observation/Interpretation)

The best commentary on Scripture is Scripture. Occasionally you and your students will be asked to check out other passages that can shed light on the primary verses of your session.

Taking It Inward (Interpretation)

It's here that we internalize what God shows us from the Digging In exercise. This is when the light bulb of the Holy Wow clicks on. You'll be asked to process your Digging In observations through ruminating, meditating and journaling your thoughts. Note: The more diligent our observation, the more accurate our interpretation.

Putting Into Practice (Application)

This is when the Holy Wow leads to transformation, causing us to adjust an attitude, change behavior, worship out of gratitude, or to do a specific command such as take care of widows and orphans. A simple question to ask at this point: God, what do I need to do?

PERSONAL PREP (PREP IT)

Because the best discipleship comes out of the overflow of the leader, we want to give you every opportunity to enjoy an overflow of Holy Wow. The book you currently hold in your hands is your personal study. Think of it as your personal time in God's Word that comes with a bonus: guides for leading others in Bible study.

Scripture Sheets: Scripture sheets for your Prep It personal study are included with each session. Many exercises call for marking and highlighting key observations. Of course, you can use your own Bible or an e-Bible for these exercises. You'll find Scripture sheets to print for your students online with your Lead It session guide at www.inword.org/online-guides.

ONLINE LEADER GUIDE (LEAD IT)

www.inword.org/online-guides

Once you've completed your personal prep, you'll want to choose the guide that best fits your setting. You'll find these online. Go to www.inword.org where you'll see the menu button "online guides." After clicking "online guides" enter password information noted below. The guides follow the approach outlined above, giving students ample opportunity for personal solitude as well as invigorating processing and application in community.

Password for *Faith Basics*: [password not available for this preview session]

Guides to choose from:

- MS** **Middle School:** This session is intended for grades six through eight. The session covers less material and contains more activities.
- HS** **High School:** This session is intended for the high school student who is looking for depth and has perhaps "signed up" for a deeper experience.
- CA** **College Age:** This session is geared for young adults, whether in college or working a job. The content does assume some spiritual initiative or curiosity on the part of the students and asks questions that may not resolve.
- CH** **Coffee House:** Just what it says—a lighter approach for the coffee house or McDonalds setting. The most appropriate age group would be high school or college age. Be sure to tip well.
- SO** **Social Media:** Want to lead a virtual small group? Or support your in-real-life small group with social media posts? Each session comes with 3-4, ready-made posts for you to use with your favorite social media app.

STUDENT "JOURNAL" PAGES

You'll find student pages and Scripture sheets with your online guide. You have permission to reproduce as many student pages as you need. We call them "journal pages" in that these pages become a "journal" of your students' experience in this study. Recommendation: Give your students a way to collect their journal pages and Scripture sheets from week to week with something like a notebook or a folder.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

For every session you'll need the same basic materials: Bibles, pens, colored pencils, a whiteboard and markers. Obviously the coffee house session will be different—we won't be asking you to take a whiteboard into Starbucks. You'll need to print out Scripture sheets and journal pages for each student. It would be helpful to provide your students

with a tool for keeping their sheets together such as a folder or three-ring notebook. This tool will then become a personal journal of their experience in this study.

Some sessions, especially middle school, have options that require a few other supplies.

STEPS AT A GLANCE

STEP	TASK	TIME
1	DO YOUR PREP Use the Prep It in this book as your personal study prior to your session.	30-60 minutes
2	CHOOSE YOUR GUIDE Go to www.inword.org/online-guides to download/print the Lead It guide appropriate for your group.	5 minutes
3	PRINT YOUR SHEETS Along with your Lead It guide, print student pages for your students.	5 minutes
4	REVIEW YOUR SESSION Review the Lead It guide to be sure you're familiar with the exercises; collect any materials called for.	10 minutes

INNERgized WEB SUPPORT

If multiple session guides for you to choose from aren't enough, there's more! You can find additional resources and tie-ins for each session at www.inword.org/innergized. Here you'll find up-to-date media suggestions, additional study background, and more session ideas to help you customize the Bible study experience for your students. Enter the following access information for *Faith Basics* when prompted.

Password: [password not available for this preview session]

PRAYER EFFORT

The purpose of this study isn't to simply fill up the next few Wednesday nights in your student ministry schedule. It's an opportunity for God to speak to your students through His Word. Therefore, the most important component of your preparation is prayer. We suggest that you organize a group of prayer partners who will pray specifically for your group's experience in this study.



The goal of this study is to help students understand how rescued Christians are and how dependent we need to be on Christ and His Word. By studying these six basics of the Christian faith in an engaging, inductive manner, students will gain a greater understanding of how devastating that Garden of Eden sin was, how separated we are from God, and how Christ enables us to bridge that separation. The better we understand what we are without God, the more we appreciate who we are with God. This is a great exercise for those who are new to the Christian faith, as well as for those who have grown up in church and have possibly lost the perspective of how radical and revolutionary a relationship with Jesus Christ is. Students will also be introduced to tools for Bible engagement that they will use for life.

REVIEW TOOL

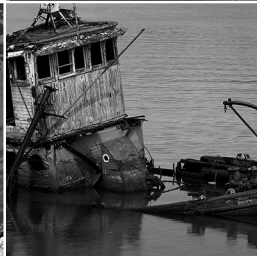
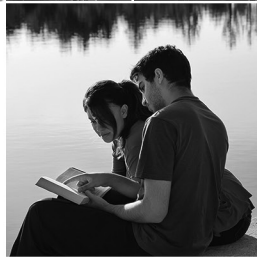
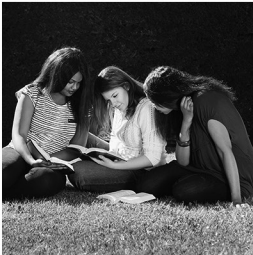
This study lends itself to a review tool that you might want to utilize. In three of the Lead It session guide tracks (middle school, high school, college age) you'll see an option for a review item, a simple item to serve as a memory trigger for each session. Since you know whether this is something your group might respond to, it's your call as to whether you use the tool. Here is a snapshot look at the review items.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Session 1: | <i>God's Word: Start Here</i> |
| Review Item Options: | Commitment card for creating a personal plan for Bible engagement
Tiny Bibles |
| Session 2: | <i>Sin: It Sinks</i> |
| Review Item Options: | Palm-sized rock
Fishing sinker/bait (not live, no hooks) |
| Session 3: | <i>Salvation: Rescued Just in Time</i> |
| Review Item Options: | Roll of Lifesavers candy
Survival/paracord bracelet |
| Session 4: | <i>Redemption: Paid in Full</i> |
| Review Item Options: | Admit One: PAID ticket
Short lengths of chain (lightweight or plastic) |
| Session 5: | <i>The Holy Spirit: Plug into the Power</i> |
| Review Item Options: | Power plug adapter
Homemade tag for phone charger |
| Session 6: | <i>Sharing Your Faith: Throw the Rope</i> |
| Review Item Options: | Small section of nylon rope
Survival/paracord bracelet |



FAITH BASICS

SESSION 1





SETTING THE HEART

Think about the last time you received a love letter from someone you had a crush on. Think about what you did with that love letter. You probably read it several times, digesting every nuance and inference as you read. And then, you likely responded. This analogy is nothing new, but it bears repeating:

The Bible is God's love letter to us. The leather and the pages (or the text and the screen) are the letter—God's written Word to us. The message is His love—God's living Word. And, like any sender of a love letter, God is desperately waiting for a response.

To understand the basics of our faith, as this study seeks to help us do, we must accept God's Word as a love letter to us—interacting with His letter in a way that allows us to digest every nuance and helps us answer the question, "What is God saying to me today?"

That's why *Faith Basics* must start with a session on the importance of God's Word. It's the only thing we have that tells us about God and teaches us the basics of how to have a relationship with Him. Thankfully, it's also all we need. Before you prepare for Session 1, allow your heart to be soft enough so that God's Word can leave a distinct impression. With that image in mind, reflect on the following passage.

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

—2 Timothy 3:14-15

It is Scripture that points us to salvation and tells us how we can receive it. So, create a comfortable, quiet, personal sanctuary; grab a cup or glass of your favorite beverage and linger with God and His love letter for a little while.

DIGGING IN

Materials Note: You may want a four-color click pen or some colored pencils

Proverbs 2 serves as an essay on the value of wisdom and the need to diligently seek it. The chapter conveys these truths by depicting the words of a father imparting wisdom to his child, an exchange we can easily take as God imparting wisdom to us, His children.

But before we dive in, a quick geometry review. (And you thought you'd never use your high school math in real life!) Do you remember doing proofs? A key element of that process was a certain maxim: *If this is true (the condition), then this is true (the conclusion)*. Scripture is packed with these “if/then” statements; if you do this (the action), then this will happen (the consequence or promise).

Read Proverbs 2:1-6 using the Scripture sheet provided for you in this book at the end of this session. As you read, do this:

- 1. Mark the “if” conditions with one color.**
- 2. Mark the “then” conclusions in another.**

When you've finished reading and marking, make a list below of the conditions and promises you've discovered.

IF

THEN

Now reflect on your lists. Circle anything that describes **how** we need to approach God's Word and what we will find when we search that way.

Picture how a treasure hunter might search for hidden treasure or a supply of silver. If he has a map and knows the treasure is “down there somewhere,” he will search with intensity. He won't just read the map one time and then search on his own. He'll study the map, analyze it, and continually refer to it as he searches. This is what we intend to do in this session and throughout the entire study—search God's Word intensely, continually referring to it as we journey. And remember the promise (the “then”) when we search that way!

DIGGING DEEPER (CAUTION: CONVICTION AHEAD!)

The following passages tell us what God's Word has to say about God's Word. Read these from your Bible or Bible app and list below anything you learn about the Word of God from these passages.

Psalm 19:7-11

Psalm 119:98-106

(Note how your students can be smarter than you!)

Isaiah 55:10-11

Matthew 22:29 (Wow!)

Mark 13:31

Hebrews 4:12

Hebrews 5:12-6:2

James 1:22-25

1 John 2:14

Considering what God’s Word has to say about God’s Word from the notes you’ve made, circle the three passages that are the most meaningful or convicting to you and note why.

How can we become wiser than our teacher and elders? (Your students will be interested in this!)

TAKING IT INWARD

As you have pondered your personal interaction with the Bible, has God moved on you in any way? Have you experienced any conviction regarding knowing God better through His Word? Most people would agree on the importance of Scripture and the priority it needs to have in the life of a Christian. However, few people reflect that priority in the time spent seeking to know God better through His Word. Take a minute to thoughtfully respond to these questions.

How has Scripture shaped you and assisted you in your faith journey?

What can you change to put yourself on a consistent diet of God’s Word?

How confident and competent do you feel in discipling/teaching out of God’s Word?

What role does Scripture play in your ministry?

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

A fundamental breakdown in studying God’s Word is that we often have no plan or goals. Take a couple minutes to brainstorm ways you can engage in God’s Word as if searching for “hidden treasure.” Maybe this study of the basics of the faith, and specifically this session, can serve as a jump start for your personal Bible engagement. The suggestions below may help prompt your heart and mind.

Take a minute to sketch out at least two ideas for taking a deeper dive into God’s Word over the next few months (long after this study is completed). We’ve provided some suggestions to help prime your idea pump.

Psalm 119: It's the longest chapter in the Bible, and, it's about the Bible. As you read this chapter, mark every reference to God's Word ("law," "commands," "precepts," "decrees" and so forth); then list on a separate sheet of paper or in a doc everything you learn about the Word of God. Hint: it can be a long list.

Acts: This book could also be titled "Foundations" in that it records the major building blocks of today's church. Read through Acts and mark every reference to the Holy Spirit. On a sheet of paper, record what happens every time the Holy Spirit shows up. Also mark any reference to the apostles and make note of their actions in a journal.

Own a Book: Master a small book such as Jude or Philemon. Find the major themes and people mentioned. Find the purpose of each of these letters.

Read the Red: Find a red-letter edition of the Bible (where Jesus' words are printed in red) and read Jesus' words. Pay special attention to any instructions Jesus gives. If you'd like to hone it down a little more, read the red of John 14-17.

INNERgized Web Support: Look for password information to InWord's unique "INNERgized" web help in the instructions of this book. Here you will find even more ideas and resources for unleashing God's Word in your personal life and ministry.

Before you close this book, select and review your Lead It Guide online at www.inword.org (www.inword.org/online-guides). You'll want to be familiar with the exercises and confident with the flow of the session. Allow time for gathering any supplies called for (see "Materials Needed" in the Lead It Guide) along with printing the guides and student pages.



Proverbs 2:1-6

- ¹ My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you,
- ² turning your ear to wisdom applying your heart to understanding—
- ³ indeed, if you call out for insight cry aloud for understanding,
- ⁴ and if you look for it as for silver search for it as for hidden treasure,
- ⁵ then you will understand the fear of the Lord find the knowledge of God.
- ⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; his mouth come knowledge and understanding.